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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001410

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [US](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH MINISTER OF CABINET AFFAIRS DENG ALOR

Classified By: CDA Cameron Hume, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: At the request of CDA Hume, Minister Deng Alor intervened on behalf of pending USG visa requests. Acting FM Karti said he would authorize issuance of the visas, pending receipt of further details on these persons. (Note: Subsequent to the meeting, MFA advised that the visas would all be issued in Washington on June 14. End note.) Deng Alor shared his insights regarding infighting among NCP members of government, particularly the impact on the position of VP Taha. End Summary.

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U.S.-Sudan Bilateral Relationship Important, but Strained  
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12. (C) On June 14, CDA Hume at his request met with Minister of Cabinet Affairs Deng Alor to discuss the state of U.S./Sudanese relations and pending visa requests. Hume acknowledged that the bilateral relationship was unusual and strained, but at the same time it was an important relationship for both sides. In these circumstances, it was essential to manage the inevitable difficulties as well as possible, rather than adding additional aggravations. In this context the Sudanese failure to issue visas to individuals necessary for USG support of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was troubling.

13. (C) Hume recalled that VP Taha had asked Deputy Secretary Zoellick for USG support in negotiating the DPA. The USG had responded, including a week-long effort by the Deputy. The President had directly urged the Darfur leaders to sign the agreement for the benefit of all Sudanese, and he had offered USG assistance with verification of implementation. Without these major efforts by the USG, it was unlikely that the DPA could have been concluded. Now the failure by the Government of Sudan to follow through even to issue visas to individuals needed for continued USG support of the peace agreement had raised a large red flag in Washington. Was the Government of Sudan committed to implementing the DPA? Did it want the bilateral relationship to improve or to worsen?

14. (C) Minister Deng Alor agreed that the relationship was both unusual and strained. He immediately called the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the visas. FM Lam Akol was away in Paris; Minister of State al-Wasila al-Samani was traveling. He talked with Minister of State Ali Karti, who was left in charge. According to Deng, Karti said he was aware of the visa requests. The USG took weeks, at times months, to respond to similar Sudanese requests, so delay was normal. Karti complained that he did not know the specific reason why these individuals were coming to Sudan. When Deng said he understood it was to assist with USG support for DPA implementation, Karti said he could authorize issuance of the visas if he had a brief description of the roles the applicants would perform. (Note: Embassy Khartoum is providing that information immediately. End note.)  
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## Actions Speak Louder than Words

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¶15. (C) Hume thanked Deng Alor for his intervention. However, more effort on both sides would be needed to keep the relationship on track. For example, when the Deputy Secretary had tried to speak with VP Taha several weeks ago,

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Taha,s office had not put the call through. Was this a signal to the U.S., or was it just a symptom of politics in Khartoum? Hume noted that Taha had not met with the UNSC delegation nor yet with UN USYG Guehenno.

¶16. (C) Deng Alor said it was a symptom of politics within the National Congress Party. Looking at a newspaper headline reporting that Minister of the Interior Al-Zubair Bashir Taha had said that Sudan did not need UN troops, half-joking he said Al-Zubair was probably a member of Al Qaida. Deng assumed that Bin Laden still had associates in Blue Nile State, where he earlier had investments. Within the NCP, Taha,s position had been difficult ever since he signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with John Garang. President Bashir had rejected Taha,s list of proposed ministerial appointments. Harder line NCP ministers, such as the ministers of defense and interior, tried to keep Taha under pressure.

¶17. (C) As an example, Deng Alor talked about Idris Hassan, a Taha ally and fellow Shaygeia. Hassan had been editor-in-chief of Al-Rai al-Aam, a paper owned by President Bashir,s family. Bashir fired Hassan and replaced him with a nephew. Taha was then able to place Hassan as editor of Al-Wahda, a smaller circulation, independent newspaper associated with Taha.

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### Diplomatic Shell Game, Access a Matter of Calculation

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¶18. (C) When Taha was dropped from the UNSC program, Deng Alor urged Taha to find time for the meeting. Taha, who was departing later on a trip to Jordan, said he had to pack. Deng Alor asked Taha to reconsider, commenting that Taha never had to pack his own bags. To &balance8 this situation, President Bashir ordered Assistant to the President Nafie Ali Nafie, a hardliner, to cancel his own meeting with the UNSC and go to South Darfur for another meeting. In place of both, Deng Alor was sent to meet with the UNSC. Summing up, Deng Alor indicated that Taha,s failure to meet with the UNSC or to take phone calls was not accidental. Either President Bashir had limited Taha,s freedom of action, or Taha had simply decided that it was prudent for him to be less exposed as the favorite Sudanese government interlocutor of the international community.

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Comment  
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¶19. (C) In Khartoum diplomatic circles speculation is always rife regarding the status of VP Taha. Three facts stand out: first, after President Bashir he remains the most important NCP political figure; second, hard-liners contest his position; and third, in terms of NCP politics, Taha,s relations with the international community are a liability, not an asset. End comment.  
HUME